

Fulbright Sees U-2 'Cover-Up'

STATINTL

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Washington
The Democratic response to Eisenhower administration reassurances on foreign policy is a declaration that "the prestige and influence of our country on the affairs of nations has reached a new low."

The dean of Senate Democrats on foreign-policy matters said he came to this conclusion in a critical analysis of the U-2 incident and its aftermath.

In a blunt but carefully worded attack on what he terms a "cover" of mistakes by the administration, Senator J. W. Fulbright (D) of Arkansas has set the tone for his fellow Democrats.

His speech on the Senate floor came less than 24 hours after President Eisenhower's address to the nation emphasizing United States strengths and ignoring current criticisms. In substance the Fulbright speech says—in much greater detail—what Adlai E. Stevenson said much earlier.

Says Confidence Lost

He acknowledged that United States allies have stood by loyally in the recent upsets and also that the four-year U-2 program demonstrated considerable technical skill.

But Senator Fulbright concluded that there had been loss of confidence "in the ability of the United States to coordinate its governmental machinery and its vast power and engage this power positively and effectively in the defense of the free world."

Lack of confidence "leads to neutralism," he continued, and "this was a contributing factor to the riots in Japan protesting our new treaty."

At the outset, Senator Fulbright insists that to gloss over United States mistakes, for appearances' sake, is to weaken the fabric of democracy.

He went far beyond the formal conclusions of his committee, which, he said, were compromised so that a non-partisan report could be made.

Motive Questioned

Pointing out that the committee was never told, even guardedly, why the U-2 flight of May 1 was so important, the senator charged:

"In view of the sensitivity of some of the other things we were told, this reticence on the part of the executive branch raises the question of whether the information sought on May 1 was in fact as important as it has been represented."

There is ground here for the conclusion that the alleged extraordinary importance of this

information is the administration's cover story for its own costly mistake."

It has been speculated previously that the U-2 was sent to be used in outer-space exploration or for military purposes.

But no Democrat in Congress has previously made this harsh judgment on the administration's motives in not telling what the U-2 was after.

Mistakes Charged

The first "mistake" of the administration, according to Senator Fulbright, was to order the U-2 flight so close to the Paris summit meeting.

"It is true, of course," administration spokesmen have repeatedly said, "that there is no good time for a failure. But to say this is to overlook the fact that there are bad times and worse times."

The testimony of administration officials, he said, indicated that no one high in the administration faced up in advance to the consequences of a failure.

On the United States reaction to the U-2 flight failure, he found the "greatest mistake was made when the government assumed responsibility for the flight."

Finally, after the truth became known, the State Department and the White House assumed a self-righteous attitude which further complicated the situation in Paris.

"Although another man might have most likely been more temperate in his choice of language, it is difficult to see how anyone could have been expected to act substantially different the way Chairman Khrushchev acted under the circumstances which confronted him in Paris."